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ABSTRACT

The construct Interpersonal Orientation (IO) refers to the degree to which a person is responsive to the interpersonal aspects of his relationships with other people. A self-report measure of IO was devised whose construct validity was supported by correlational data. Two experiments were conducted to assess the potential usefulness of IO in social-psychological research. In the first experiment, subjects of both sexes with high IOs expressed greater liking for individuals from whom they had received messages disclosing personal information. In the second experiment, males and subjects with low IOs behaved in accordance with the notion of equity (the idea that rewards are allocated on the basis of performance); females and subjects with high IOs were more concerned with equality than with equity. The results support the usefulness of this measure which allows variation in behavior to be attributed to a stable personality difference. (Author/CS)

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DEVELOPMENT OF A SCALE OF INTERPERSONAL ORIENTATION

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DEVELOPMENT OF A SCALE OF INTERPERSONAL ORIENTATION

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In The Social Psychology of Bargaining and Negotiation (1975), Rubin and Brown developed the theoretical parameters of a construct they called Interpersonal Orientation (IO). In discussing the morass of contradictory findings relating individual differences to variations in bargaining behavior, Rubin and Brown observed that, "the research has been extensive, highly varied, and replete with ambiguous and apparently contradictory findings" (1975, p. 160). For example, in many studies males appear to be more cooperative than females, while an equally large number of studies portrays females as more cooperative. Similar results have been found for individual difference variables such as race, age, Machiavellianism, and internationalism. The IO construct was proposed to facilitate the reconciliation of these ambiguities and apparent contradictions. The person high in IO "is, first and foremost, responsive to the interpersonal aspects of his relationship with the other. He is both interested in, and reactive to, variations in the other's behavior" (Rubin & Brown, 1975, p. 158). The low IO person "is characterized...by a nonresponsiveness to interpersonal aspects of his relationship with the other. His interest is...in maximizing his own gain....He is not interested in the other party's true nature" (p. 159).

It is apparent that IO is relevant not only to bargaining behavior, but, potentially, to many other areas of concern to social psychologists. It is possible, for example, that people differing in IO will seek out different kinds of situations or relationships, and will respond to them differently. Further, and of more specific relevance to this paper, it may be that certain observed sex differences in social behavior may be understood more in terms of a

difference in IO that is correlated with sex. Rubin and Brown speculated that women would be more likely to respond as high IOs, while men would tend to be low scorers. If true, then it should be possible to replicate studies where sex differences have previously been found and, by incorporating IO into the design, either attenuate or eliminate the sex difference in favor of an IO difference.

In the first part of this paper, our efforts to construct a self-report measure of IO will be discussed. Correlational data will be presented to support the construct validity of IO. Then two experiments will be briefly described, in which our predictions were tested concerning the effects of sex and IO on self-disclosure and on equity.

Scale Construction

An original pool of 100 items was generated to tap the dimensions of IO as conceptualized by Rubin and Brown (1975, ch. 7). These Likert-type items were administered to a sample of 193 Tufts University undergraduates. An item analysis resulted in the elimination of 39 items which yielded non-significant correlations with total scores. The remaining 61 items were administered to a second sample of 155 subjects. These items were grouped into four a priori subscales: sociability, responsiveness to others, attention to personal characteristics of others, and interest in others. After additional item analyses, one subscale (attention to personal characteristics) was dropped due to low internal consistency. The resulting purified instrument consists of 36 items forming four scales:

1. Sociability. Not an IO scale, this scale was designed to establish discriminant validity. IO is conceived as being different from mere gregariousness. A highly interpersonally oriented person could be quite reluctant to seek out relationships which experience has demonstrated to be quite painful.

In fact, the following items are uncorrelated with overall IO: "I would rather spend an evening reading a good book than talking with friends" (#16); "I am basically a loner" (#33).

2. Responsiveness. High scorers tend to report being sensitive to actions and evaluations by others: "I often find myself getting really angry at other people" (#5); "I am greatly influenced by the moods of the people I am with" (#9); "I am very sensitive to criticism" (#30).

3. Interest in Others. High scorers report being interested in other people and what they are like: "I find myself wondering what telephone operators are really like" (#36); "I am interested in knowing what makes people 'tick'" (#6).

4. Overall IO. This scale includes all items which correlate significantly with total scores. Item content is heterogeneous, including most items from the other three scales as well as several additional items. Because of the higher reliability (alpha = .79) and its wider range of applicability, we have tended to select subjects on the basis of their scores on this scale.

Relationship between IO and Other Variables

Sex, Age, and Major Field

Samples totalling 879 subjects have completed the IO scale over the past two years. On all four scales, women score higher than men ($p < .001$). Juniors and seniors tend to score lower than freshmen and sophomores. And students majoring in, or planning to major in behavioral sciences or occupational therapy score highest; social science, natural science, and humanities majors next, and engineering students scoring lowest in IO. The sex difference is in clear accordance with Rubin and Brown's theoretical expectations. The "people-oriented" majors scoring highest and the "object-oriented" majors scoring lowest further attest to construct validity. Rubin and Brown speculated (p. 160) that

age would be positively correlated with IO, but they were comparing young children with college students. The developmental trend relating increasing age to lower IO within college clearly requires further investigation.

Other Personality Tests

A sample of subjects who had previously completed the IO scales were administered a battery of additional tests. Female subjects demonstrated a small but reliable correlation ($r = .18$, $p < .05$) between IO and Snyder's (1974) Self-Monitoring scale. The comparable correlations for males ($r = .43$, $p < .001$) and both sexes combined ($r = .20$, $p < .01$) were higher. Since "the self-monitoring individual is one who, out of a concern for social appropriateness, is particularly sensitive to the expression and self-presentation of others in social situations" (Snyder, 1974, p. 528), it is not surprising that the correlations are positive. That the correlations are only modestly high, however, suggests that the two constructs are only partially overlapping. Females showed a modest negative correlation ($r = -.28$, $p < .01$) between IO and Machiavellianism (Christie, in Robinson & Shaver, 1973). Males did not show this relationship, but the combined samples did. Males and both sexes combined showed a positive correlation with field dependence (Hidden Figures Test, Form 5, ETS, 1962). While highly speculative, this suggests that for high IOs, other people may "get in the way" of an "objective" view of a situation in the same way a confusing patterned background may interfere with accurate recognition of a stimulus. Males showed a rather large negative correlation ($r = -.49$, $p < .01$) between IO and inner directedness, and a substantial positive correlation between IO and other directedness (Kassarjian, 1962), suggesting that high IO males "depend upon the people around them to give direction to their actions" (Kassarjian, 1962, p. 213). While these overall results are generally supportive of the construct validity of IO, the many sex differences need to be further explored.

Interview Data

A sample of 12 high IO and 12 low IO subjects was interviewed individually. Males and females were equally represented in each group. The interview covered topics such as family relations, high school and college experiences, and friendships. Some representative findings include: Compared to low scorers, high IOs report getting along better with teachers, and report being perceived by teachers more in interpersonal terms. Low scorers report that their teachers perceive them more in terms of high ability, even though the two groups do not differ in reported SAT scores or GPA. High IOs feel closer to both parents and consider modeling their lives after them; report being excellent judges of character; and react to and feel more negative in response to criticism. When asked how college differed from their expectations, high IOs mentioned social life, low IOs emphasized academic matters.

Experimental Findings

Experiment 1: Self-disclosure and Liking

Several investigators (summarized by Cozby, 1973, p. 83) have noted that both men and women respond to self-disclosures with disclosures of comparable intimacy, but that the sexes differ in terms of reported liking for those who have disclosed to them. Specifically, women's liking for the other is influenced by the receipt of self-disclosures, while men do not seem to use that information in forming an attitude toward the discloser. In other words, women are responding as high IOs, attending to, and being influenced by, the interpersonal behaviors of the other. Men, on the other hand, are behaving as low IOs, minimizing the social nature of the situation.

In the present experiment, sex and IO were combined factorially to determine the effects of each on liking following an exchange of self-disclosure messages. It was hypothesized that the effects of sex on liking would be attenuated or eliminated by deconfounding sex and IO.

Subjects and Design. 82 subjects were selected from a much larger sample on the basis of the extremity of their Overall IO scores obtained several weeks earlier. Approximately half of the males and females were high IOs and the other half low IOs. Each subject was randomly assigned to either a high, medium, or low intimacy self-disclosure condition.

Method. Subjects were "paired" with a "phantom other" and exchanged written personal messages. The phantom always sent the first message, which had been transcribed earlier and was pretested to be either of high, medium, or low intimacy. The subject was given 5 minutes to write a personal message to the partner. The procedure was repeated for a second trial, with intimacy level held constant. Subjects later completed a questionnaire, in which the critical attraction measure, Byrne's (1971) 2-item Interpersonal Judgment Scale (IJS) was embedded.

Results and Discussion. A 2 x 2 x 3 (Sex x IO x Intimacy) between-subjects analysis of variance of IJS ratings yielded a main effect for IO ($F_{1,81} = 6.11$, $p < .025$). On a scale ranging from 2 (low attraction) to 68 (high attraction), High IO subjects gave a mean rating of 44.6 to the other, while Low IOs gave their "partner" a mean rating of 38.3. Similar results were obtained in separate analyses of the two items comprising the IJS, and for an index of 5 evaluative semantic differential scales.

It is noteworthy that sex of subject was a non-significant predictor of liking ($F < 1$). IO was the single significant source of variance. This suggests that the previously reported sex differences may be artifacts better attributed to the differences in IO which normally characterize men and women.

Experiment 2: Equity and Equality

An incisive article by Kahn (1979) makes the point that equity theory is essentially masculine--that hard, skillful work will be rewarded. The equity

literature has often found sex differences in the allocation of rewards following successful or unsuccessful performances. Where such differences have been found, men have tended to behave in accordance with equity theory, while women have either distributed rewards equally, or have used some combination of equity and equality. Such results lend themselves to an IO interpretation. The low IO (typically male), being more aware of rewards and costs and less sensitive to other people, will be more likely to behave in terms of equity considerations. The high IO (female) will be more likely to place the other person in the equation, to try to understand inferior performance, for example, and to compensate for it. Hence our hypothesis: Low IOs will allocate rewards in accordance with equity theory; high IOs will allocate them more equally.

Subjects and Design. 56 subjects were selected in the same manner as in Experiment 1. The 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 mixed design combined Sex, IO, Success-Failure (all between-subjects factors) and Task (masculine and feminine).

Method. The experiment was patterned closely after Leventhal & Lane (1970), with the addition of the second task. Subjects were required to mentally solve 50 rather tricky multiplication problems and to predict how a sample of college students had answered 40 personality test items. After each task subjects were informed that they had either performed much better or much worse than their phantom partner. They then were told they could divide a monetary reward in any way they chose. The chosen percentages constituted the major dependent measure.

Results and Discussion. Several effects reached significance. Of particular importance here are the Sex x Success-Failure ($F_{1,48} = 4.01$, $p < .06$) and the IO x Success-Failure ($F_{1,48} = 5.38$, $p < .05$) interactions. Males were willing to give their inferior partners 43.57% of the reward, but offered to give 63.21% to superior partners. Women were more equal, offering 47.86% to the inferior and 56.25% to the superior partner. Similar results were found for high and low IO subjects. Low IOs offered 43.21% to the inferior and 63.75% to the superior partner.

For high IOs, the comparable figures are 48.21%and 55.71%.

Furthermore, these effects were additive. High IO females were the most equal (48.57% to inferior, 51.07% to superior), low IO males the most equitable (39.29% and 66.07%), with the other two groups in between. One other finding of interest is that after the math problems, high IO subjects gave their partners 50% of the reward 75% of the time; the comparable percentage for low IOs is 42.9% ($X^2 = 4.72$, $p < .05$). Norms of equity and equality do appear to vary with sex as well as IO. The adherence to equality demonstrated by females was accentuated when they were high in IO, while males' concern with equity was most pronounced when they were low in IO.

General Discussion

The results reported here suggest the potential usefulness of IO. The parameters of the construct as measured by the scales agree in most ways with those developed theoretically by Rubin and Brown. The scales are reliable and the correlational evidence suggests construct validity. The two experiments have demonstrated that the IO construct may add to our understanding of certain social behaviors. In the first experiment, controlling for IO completely eliminated a previously demonstrated sex difference. And in the second, sex and IO were found to contribute equally to an understanding of equity behavior. From our point of view, it is theoretically more appealing to be able to attribute variations in behavior to a stable personality difference, the nature of which is conceptually related to the behavior in question, than to attribute such variations to the usually conceptually dead-end and merely descriptive "sex differences."

Current efforts are directed at further purifying the scales, extending the application of the construct to other areas of social behavior, and developing a theory of the adaptive significance of high and low interpersonal orientation.

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